COMICS INTERVIEW PUBLICATION

#4

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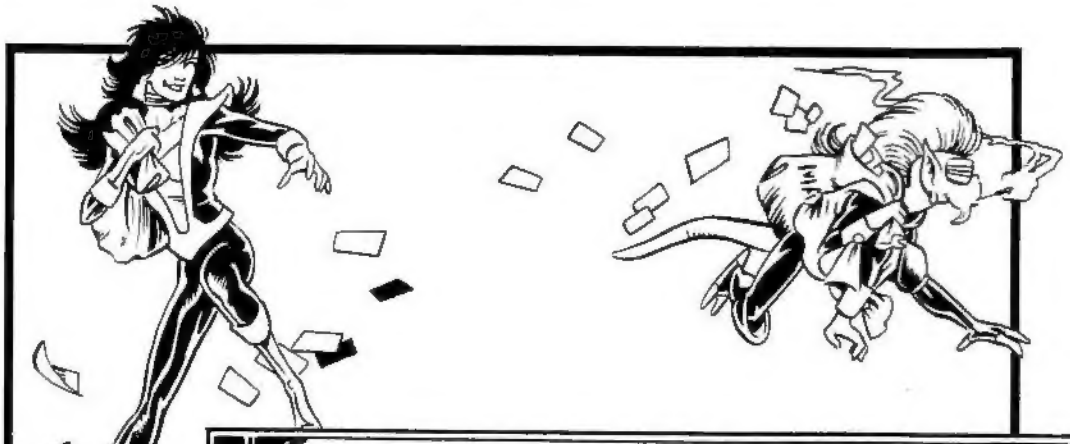
ARISTOCRATIC XTRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELING THIEVES™

"AT THE MERCY OF THE MIDDLEMEN. . ."

"GLUT!"

PAGPST



"X-THIEVES" X-TRA!

Comics Interview 234 Fifth Ave. Suite 301 New York, NY 10001

It's rather obvious what this issue satirizes — I'm not going to go into any of the reasons the black-and-white comics "glut" came to exist, but I would like to propose a suggestion that might help us avoid another one just like it with color comics.

My suggestion is to the store owners. If you have no information at all about a book, don't order it! That's all there is to it.

Nothing we do can stop people from publishing a comic book if they have the money to do it (nor should we want to stop anyone from publishing — that's a basic right we all have). What we should want to do is not encourage people who haven't the talent to continue doing this. Anyway, in an effort to help those black-and-white books I particularly like to survive, I'm going to recommend some titles that I think you would most likely enjoy.

One of the best new books out — black-and-white or otherwise — is **Concrete** *from Dark Horse Comics. This book has everything you could ask for — warmth, humor, adventure, human characters, and lots of fun! A six-issue mini-series,* **Wardrums**, *has just begun and it is a great place to get started! Now is the perfect opportunity for those of you who haven't read* **Journey** *to get started enjoying this series. I can't forget* **Zot!** *which has just recently been revived in black-and-white. Audrey and I loved this book when it came out in color (the first 10 issues — which you should still be able to get rather cheaply from many dealers) and we like it just as much in black and white. And for those of you who like super-hero books,* **Zot!** *is one — though a bit different than many of the others. There are lots of good black and white books that I don't have room to go into in any detail — books like* **Cerebus, Elfquest, Stig's Inferno, Captain Confederacy, Fish Police** *and, of course, the* **Southern Knights**, *the up-coming* **Dragon** *mini-series, and* **MICRA** *(all three from Comics Interview Publications)!*

Henry

Dear Henry, Mark, and David,

Wow! Finally, in this mag, a concept that I can really get behind! (Er, or *something* like that!) No, no *not* reality! Non-reality, un-reality, other-reality — or whatever the heck it is that they have in Fred and Bianca's universe! I mean, I'm the last person to insist on total reality in everything, or in comics! (If I did *that*, I'd only be doing myself out of my "job" as a crazed and only semi-real letterhack. And besides, as someone once said to me, "You'll love being crazy. The walls move." I don't remember who it was, but he was obviously seriously nutso. But then, who am I to be critical of *that*, right?)

I most always think it is overly-cute and self-defeating for characters in a story to act like they *know* they're only characters in a story. It destroys that crucial bit of "reality" that is necessary to believe in a piece of fiction as being worthwhile and it's usually also kind of tediously done, to boot. However, you managed to pull off this trick very nicely in #2. First, you didn't beat us over the head with it. Mostly, the references were to the effects of reality entering their universe, not to how they were just characters on a comics page. (Perhaps a subtle difference, but crucial in my eyes.) Second, you used this device very cleverly. The idea that unreality is necessary to the proper functioning of a comic-book-universe was nicely displayed. While some people always call for more "realism," you show that in at least some cases, an aura of unreality is essential to the integrity of the concept. Third — well, Fred and Bianca are pretty darn "unreal" to start out with, so I definitely wasn't having any illusions shattered by the demonstration that they're, well, pretty unreal. (Even though Bianca *is* really pretty and Fred is really pretty weird! Though this is not to say that Bianca is normal or anything . . .)

One of the unreal things in their universe seems to be their logic. On page 8, Fred uses a logical deduction that is not valid in *our* universe. He says, "If time travel means no reality, *then* no time travel means reality!" What Fred is essentially says is that if we know that "A implies B" is true, then we also know that "not-A implies not-B" is true. However, this is logically unsupportable. Let me demonstrate by an example. Take the statement "If it is raining then the sidewalk is wet." Let us assume that this is a true statement. Then, according to Fred, we also know that "If it is not raining then the sidewalk is not wet." This obviously does not logically follow. For instance, even if it isn't raining, the sidewalk could still be wet — it could still be wet *following* a rainfall, or a lawn sprinkler could be making it wet, or any other of a number of possibilities. In fact, from "A implies B," the valid logical derivation is "not-B implies not-A". (In our example, "If the sidewalk is not wet then it is not raining." In Fred's case, there could have been any number of reasons why his time traveling attempt failed, such as a mechanical fault in the Fredmobile.)

Well gosh, Henry, if you don't want to turn the lettercol into a raging wasteland of intense political debate, then I guess I'll go along with you! Given your obviously sincere convictions on the subject, it was kind of you to print my thoughts while refraining from responding to them. (Go on, give it a shot! If only in the interests of equal access! It's your mag, after all!) One thing I hope that we can agree on is that it's good that we live in a society where we can at least voice our political views openly and freely (which is a privilege not accorded to the vast majority of human beings and one that we must defend and employ, since it is the foundation of most of our other freedoms.)

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P.S. I called freedom of speech a "privilege" rather than a "right" because I was speaking in a global sense. In our society it is indeed a "right," but viewed globally it must be seen as a "privilege" tht a society grants to itself, insofar as it can be revoked and suppressed (as we sadly see is common throughout most of the world).

Sometime, if you ever come out in public and let the world know who you really are, I'll introduce you to my restraint — her name is Audrey! I was all set to jump into a political reply to you (it began something like, "TM, you ignorant slut!") but Audrey got me to think twice about it and our political debating became a thing of the past. However, I feel I can reply to one thing you stated at the end of your letter. Yes, I am grateful that I can speak openly about my political views and I realize that many, many people in the world don't have the opportunity. But I've also noticed a tendency people have of blinding themselves to what is happening by comparing what they have to what other people have. We have lots of freedom compared to your average Soviet citizen — but that doesn't mean we should be satisfied wth that! There are still many freedoms being curtailed in this country (can't speak for Canada, never having lived there) but as long as people can complain about their government they seem content not to worry about what they don't have. I feel I'm not blinded by that and will continue to campaign for all my rights until I have them. Okay, now we can end the political debating!

ARISTOCRATIC X-TRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELING THIEVES™

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CREATED BY VOGEL, PROPST, KRAFT

WAITING, THE LONE FIGURE CROUCHES ABOVE THE POUNDING SURF. WAITING, HE WATCHES THE WATER RISE AND FALL BENEATH HIM. WAITING FOR JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT.
THEN... THE MOMENT COMES!
WHAT FORM! WHAT STYLE!
HEY, FRED-- YOU COULD HAVE WARNED ME BEFORE YOU JUMPED! I SPILLED--
BIANCA, DEAR -- THIS DIVE TOOK SPLIT-SECOND TIMING! I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WARN YOU!

GLUT

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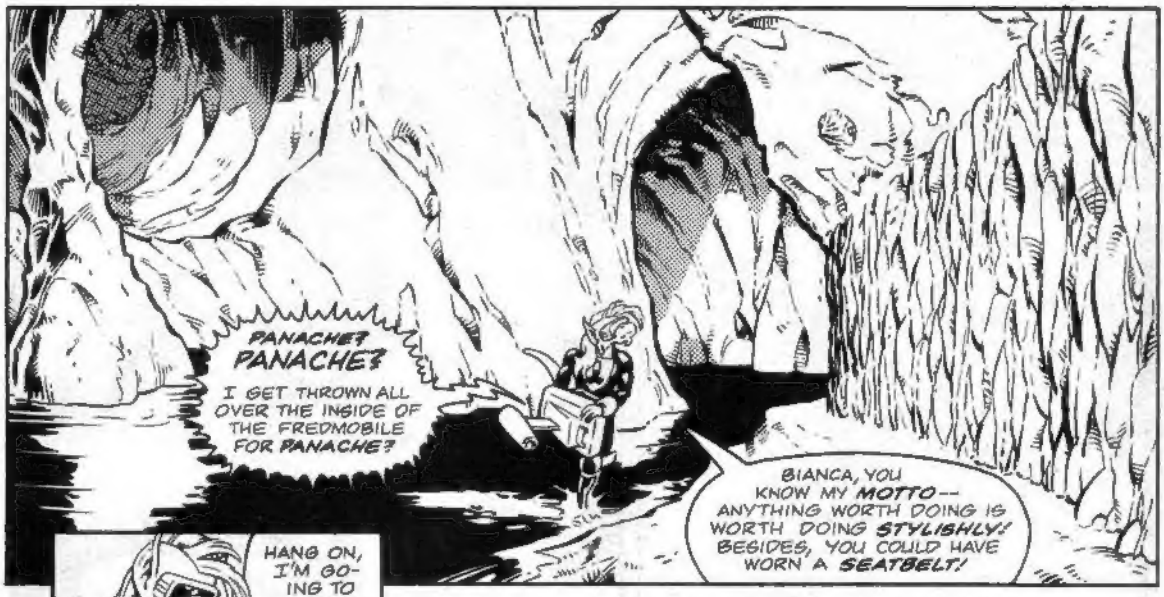
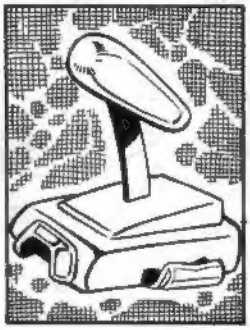
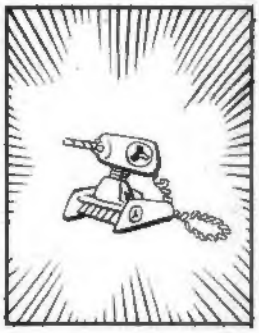
SPLASH!
WHOOSH
THE WATER SEEMS TO SHATTER AS HE PLUNGES FROM ONE ALIEN WORLD TO ANOTHER.
ALL RIGHT, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WARN ME --BUT WHY DID YOU HAVE TO WEAR THE FREDMOBILE? WHY COULDN'T WE JUST TURN IT INTO A SUB-MARINE?
FRED?
GLUB, GLUB!
OH--STILL UNDER WATER, ARE WE?
THE UNDERWATER WORLD RECEDES BELOW HIM AS HE RISES TOWARD THE RIPPLING MIRROR THAT IS THE SURFACE.
MADE IT!
GOOD--NOW CAN YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION?
QUESTION?
QUESTION! YOU KNOW, WHY DIDN'T WE JUST TURN THE FREDMOBILE INTO A MINISUB TO GET HERE?
BECAUSE, MY DEAR, THIS WAY HAS SO MUCH MORE PANACHE!

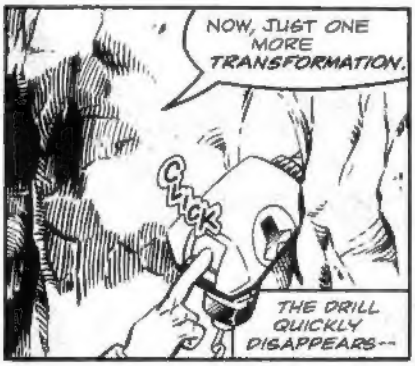

PANACHE?
PANACHE?
I GET THROWN ALL OVER THE INSIDE OF THE FREDMOBILE FOR PANACHE?
BIANCA, YOU KNOW MY MOTTO-- ANYTHING WORTH DOING IS WORTH DOING STYLISHLY! BESIDES, YOU COULD HAVE WORN A SEATBELT!

THE AQUALUNG FOLDS IN ON ITSELF! NEW OPENINGS APPEAR, PROTRUSIONS SLIDE OUT, AND --THROUGH THE MIRACLE OF PROPSTIAN TECHNOLOGY-- A POWER DRILL IS FORMED!

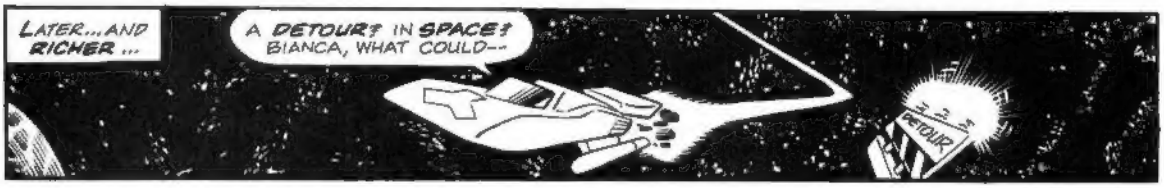




THE BIT CHEWS HUNGRILY AT THE ROCK AS HE STEADILY PUSHES AGAINST THE DRILL. THEN, WITH THE PRESS OF A BUTTON, THE BIT SLOWLY EXTENDS ITSELF UNTIL...
CHINK CHINK
WE'RE THROUGH!



YOU DON'T STEP ONE FOOT THROUGH THAT DOOR UNTIL YOU'RE DRY!
OKAY, BIANCA--
--I WON'T STEP IN AT ALL!
HEY! YOU COULD HAVE AT LEAST SHAKEN OFF THE EXCESS WATER!
IF YOU INSIST!
WHOA! WAIT! NOT ON ME, YOU IDIOT! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT OUTSIDE!
SORRY, COULDN'T WAIT! THERE'S THIEVING TO BE DONE!
HE LEAPS THROUGH THE INSIDE OF THE DRILL BIT, MADE LARGER THROUGH THE MAGIC OF RELATIVE DIMENSIONS!
WOW!
YEAH--THIS IS A NICE GEM VAULT! TOO BAD THE OWNER DIDN'T THINK TO GUARD THE BACK WAY IN!


LATER...AND RICHER...
A DETOUR? IN SPACE? BIANCA, WHAT COULD--
DETOUR

THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, FRED! IT LOOKS LIKE A GLITCH IN TIME IS FORMING!
DETOUR
A GLITCH? THIS IS BIG NEWS! THOSE THINGS DON'T SHOW UP VERY OFTEN OR LAST THAT LONG, EITHER!

WE COULD USE IT TO PULL OFF SOME TRULY AWESOME JOBS!
I HEARD ABOUT A THIEF WHO USED ONE TO HELP HIM STEAL AN ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM!
YEAH, BUT THE CONTINUITY INQUISITION ALWAYS KEEPS A CLOSE GUARD ON SPACE ANOMOLIES LIKE THAT!
SO? WHEN HAVE THEY EVER BEEN ABLE TO STOP US?

HERE WE ARE AT THE FENCE'S PLACE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR HAUL WILL BRING US?
I HATE GUESSING, FRED--I ALWAYS GUESS MORE THAN THEY EVER GIVE! STILL, I'D SAY IT'S WORTH ABOUT 60,000 CREDITS!
THIEFS FRIEND FENCE

LOOK AT ALL THESE PEOPLE AROUND HERE! THEY CAN'T ALL BE THIEVES, CAN THEY?
THEY MUST BE-- WHO ELSE WOULD WALK OUT OF A FENCE'S SHOP COUNTING MONEY?
GOOD DAY, SIR! I'M CARLTON, THE DOORMAN HERE AT THE THIEF'S FRIEND, INC.
YOU WEREN'T HERE LAST TIME --IS BUSINESS THAT GOOD?
MOST ASSUREDLY!
I'M NEEDED JUST TO CONTROL INCREASED TRAFFIC!
HE WASN'T KIDDING, FRED! JUST LOOK AT THIS LINE!
YEAH, WE'RE USUALLY THE ONLY ONES HERE AT THIS HOUR!
BOY, WITH THE MARKET UP I'M THINKING OF STEALING MORE STUFF! WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SUDDENLY I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!
HEH, HEH--WITH ALL THE PROFITS THAT HAVE BEEN ROLLING IN LATELY I WAS ABLE TO BUY A NEW SEEING EYE CANE! IT MAKES IT EASIER FOR THIS OLD FENCE TO GET AROUND, FOR SURE!
I'LL PROBABLY TRY TO STEAL STUFF MORE OFTEN, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO GO OVERBOARD ON THIS YET!

NIGHT HAS LONG SINCE FALLEN BEFORE FRED AND BIANCA SELL THEIR HAUL...

EVEN IF WE *DID* HAVE TO WAIT A WHILE, WE GOT A *GOOD DEAL!*

YEAH, I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY GAVE US 70,000 CREDITS! THE MARKET MUST *REALLY* BE UP!

COME AGAIN! AND REMEMBER--STEAL *WELL*, STEAL *OFTEN*, AND SELL TO THE *THIEF'S FRIEND!*

SO HOW ABOUT A LITTLE *CELEBRATION?*

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME! LET'S--

EXCUSE ME, I'M STARTING UP A NEW *THIEVING COMPANY* AND AM LOOKING TO HIRE ONLY THE *BEST* THIEVES--- YOUNG OR OLD!

I LIKE YOUR *STYLE!* I WANT YOU TWO TO JOIN ME!

HUH?

SORRY, NOT INTERESTED! BESIDES, I BET YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT *THIEVERY!*

WHAT'S TO *KNOW?* YOU TAKE THINGS AND THEN YOU *SELL* THEM!

THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY OF YOUR LIVES--YOU *CAN'T* TURN IT DOWN!

OH, REALLY? JUST *WATCH* US!

NOW, BUG OFF!

YOU'LL *REGRET* THIS! DON'T COME *BEGGING* TO ME WHEN I'M THE BIGGEST NAME IN *THIEFDOM!*

LOOK, BUB-- THE LADY SAID *BUG OFF!*

I WILL NOT BUG OFF! YOU OLD PROS THINK YOU'RE SO GREAT, SO MUCH BETTER THAN US NEW GUYS! BUT YOU'LL SEE! WE'LL--
WAK
YOU'RE RIGHT ON ONE POINT-- I DO THINK I'M GREAT!
BUT I ALSO LIKE TO SEE TALENTED NEWCOMERS-- EMPHASIS ON TALENTED!
HEY-- IF YOU WANTED ME TO GO, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY SO?
BLT BLT BLT
BLAM
SOME PEOPLE--A LITTLE REJECTION AND THEY GO ALL TO PIECES!
FOUND YOUR PIPE, YET?
YEP! LET'S GO!
MOMENTS LATER...
ARE THEY GONE YET?
THEY ARE! GOOD-- GOOD FOR THEM! HA--WHEN NEXT THEY SEE ME I'LL BE ON TOP OF THE THIEVING WORLD!

A MONTH LATER..
SO HOW'S BUSINESS BEEN FOR YOU, LATELY?
IT'S BEEN GOOD --REAL GOOD! YOU KNOW, AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE OF MY GENIUS, THOUGH, NOT THE MARKET...
WHERE THE HELL DID ALL THESE THIEVES COME FROM?
BEATS ME! AND LOOK AT THE STUFF SOME OF THESE NEW GUYS ARE STEALING! EVEN THE BOURGEOIS WOULDN'T TOUCH IT!

HI, BUZZ--LOOKS LIKE BUSINESS IS BOOMING!
OH, IT IS FRED--IT IS! THE MARKET IS UP-- EVERYTHING IS SELLING!
WHY, I'VE MADE ENOUGH TO FINALLY BUY MYSELF A SEEING-EYE CAT!

WELL, THAT'S...
'SCUSE ME! GOT A C.O.D. PACKAGE FER YA, BUZZ!
IT'S FROM--
DON'T BOTHER ME WITH DETAILS --WHERE DO I SIGN?
THIS CAN'T BE THE SAME TIGHTWAD WE'VE DEALT WITH ALL THESE YEARS!

DON'T YOU EVEN WANT TO CHECK THE CONTENTS?
NOPE! THE MARKET'S ZOOMING! IF IT'S STOLEN, IT'LL SELL!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'D KNOW! HM... MAYBE I SHOULD BECOME A THIEF, TOO!
NOW, BIANCA, HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE FOR THIS WONDERFUL HAUL YOU'VE BROUGHT ME?
YOU THINK YOU HAVE PLANS? I'M GOING TO STEAL THE CROWN JEWELS OF CENTAURI, ALL THE PYRAMIDS ON EARTH, AND THE ENTIRE ANDROMEDA GALAXY!
BUZZ, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT--
EXCUSE ME A MOMENT!
YOUNG ONE, I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING YOUR PLANS--AND EXCITING ONES THEY ARE, TOO! BRING IT ALL TO ME--YOU HAVE MY WORD I'LL BUY EVERYTHING!
YOU WON'T REGRET IT! OUR THEFTS WILL ONLY BE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY--NOT TO MENTION IN-NO-VA-TIVE!
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER...
YOU KNOW, YOU TWO SHOULD STEP UP YOUR STEALING! CASH IN ON THIS BOOMING MARKET!

GOOD THIEVERY TAKES **GOOD PLANNING**--AND THAT TAKES **TIME!** BESIDES, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF **SO-CALLED THIEVES** JUST BEGGING TO STEAL MORE STUFF FOR YOU!

*FIVE WEEKS PASS. FRED AND BIANCA SPEND THE TIME PLANNING AND EXECUTING **ONE JOB**--OTHERS AREN'T **SO PARTICULAR**...*

HI, CARLETON! IS BUZZ A **MILLIONAIRE** YET?

NOT **HARDLY!** HE HASN'T EVEN **PAID** ME IN THE LAST **TWO WEEKS!**

AND THAT'S NOT THE **WORST** OF IT!

THE THIEF'S FRIEND

FENCE

NOW, IF YOU FOLKS WOULD KINDLY TAKE A **NUMBER**...

A NUMBER--? SURELY, IT CAN'T BE **THAT** BAD INSIDE!

UM, YES IT **CAN**, BIANCA! ALL I CAN SEE ARE **LEGS** --**LOTS** OF LEGS! GIVE ME A **LIFT!**

WOW! IT'S **WALL-TO-WALL THIEVES** IN HERE!

I'M STEPPING UP TO **15 JOBS A MONTH!**

ALL OUR FIRST THEFTS **SOLD OUT!**

WE'RE PUTTING **FUN** BACK IN THIEVERY!

SAY, AREN'T YOU FRED AND BIANCA, THE ARISTOCRATIC XTRATERRESTRIAL TIME-TRAVELLING THIEVES?
YES, WE ARE. AND YOU'RE--?
ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST FANS! I'VE FOLLOWED YOUR CAREER FOR 166UE6!
IZOD

BUT I THINK YOU'VE BEEN DOING A FEW THINGS WRONG. I MEAN, YOU'RE GREAT, BUT YOU'RE TOO 6LOW! YOU NEED TO STEAL AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK IN THIS BUSINESS--NOT ONCE EVERY TWO MONTHS! AND THE STUFF YOU STEAL--NO ONE WANT6 ARTSY 6TUFF THESE DAYS!

THANKS FOR THE ADVICE, BUT WE'LL JUST MUDDLE THROUGH IN OUR OWN WAY!
THERE'S OUR NUMBER --GOT TO RUN!
NOW 6ERV ING

6EVERAL MINUTE6 LATER...
I'LL GIVE YOU 10,000 CREDIT6 FOR IT!
WHAT--?! IT'6 WORTH TEN TIME6 THAT MUCH!
6ORRY, THAT'6 ALL I CAN AFFORD --MY CA6H I6 TIED UP IN ALL THE WORTH-LE66 JUNK YOU THIEVE6 HAVE BEEN FOI6TING OFF ON ME!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "YOU THIEVE6"? JU6T BECAU6E YOU'VE BEEN PAYING DIAMOND PRICE6 FOR DIRT, DON'T BLAME THO6E OF U6 WHO 6TILL BRING DIAMOND6!

YO, BUZZ--- MORE C.O.D. PACKAGES! WHERE YOU WANT 'EM?
BACK OUT THE DOOR!
HUH? DON'T YOU WANT TO CHECK--
NO, I DON'T! IF IT'S STOLEN MERCHANDISE, IT WON'T SELL!
OKAY, BUZZ, WHATEVER YOU SAY... AFTER ALL, YOU KNOW THE INDUSTRY!
NOW, ABOUT THAT ABSURD OFFER--
IT WASN'T ABSURD --IT WAS REALISTIC! YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET BIG MONEY THESE DAYS?
STEAL SOME STUFF LIKE YOU STOLE FIVE YEARS AGO! NOW THAT WAS GREAT STOLEN MERCHANDISE!
AS FOR THIS STUFF--10,000 CREDITS--TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT!
I THINK WE'LL LEAVE IT! COME ON, BIANCA--SOME FENCE OUT THERE WILL PAY US WHAT THIS IS REALLY WORTH!
AT ANOTHER FENCE...
I'LL GIVE YOU 4500 CREDITS FOR IT!
ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU CAN SELL IT FOR 15 TIMES THAT!
IF I SELL IT! THE MARKET'S DOWN-- STOLEN GOODS JUST AREN'T SELLING!

AND...
9000— THAT'S MY FINAL OFFER!
THEN...
READ MY LIPS --NO!
NO HECKS!
AND, FINALLY...
BUY? BUY?! ARE YOU CRAZY? GO AWAY!
POLES
WELL, I SEE YOU'VE REALIZED MY OFFER WAS FAIR AFTER ALL!
NOT HARDLY, BUZZ, BUT IT'S THE BEST ONE WE GOT!
SORRY, I CAN ONLY AFFORD 9750 NOW!
SIGH SOLD...
WEEKS PASS, THE DISASTER DEEPENS, UNTIL...
LOOK AT ALL THIS JUNK! WHY WOULD ANYONE BOTHER TO STEAL IT--MUCH LESS BUY IT?
REMEMBER, BIANCA--BUZZ IS BUYING IT ALL BLIND.
36 DAZZ GRAPH NOV
BLINDNESS ISN'T AN EXCUSE FOR FOOLISHNESS!
SWISH
WELL, THIS GOLDEN GUMBY SHOULD OPEN HIS EYES!

YIPE! NO POUNCING AT THE THIEVES, KITTY CAT!
DOESN'T BUZZ BOTHER TO FEED YOU?
CHOMP
FRED?
HOP
DON'T WORRY --YOU JUST TAKE CARE OF GUMBY!
MROW!
HI, HO, KITTY CAT, AWAY!
SPIT! HISS!
GOT IT!
HEY, BUZZ! WAIT 'TIL YOU CHECK THIS OUT! YOU'LL LOVE--
NO! GO AWAY! NO THIEVES ALLOWED!
I SAID, GO AWAY!
DON'T BE SO PUSHY--
--I'M GETTING ENOUGH OF THAT FROM THE OUTSIDE!
WHOA, CAT! I WANT TO GET OFF!
STOP!
CEASE!
DESIST!
SLOW DOWN, EVEN!

HEY! KNOCK OFF THE SQUEEZE PLAY, GUYS!
NO, NO, NO! NO MORE THIEVES! I CAN'T AFFORD YOU!
OOPS! KITTY-- YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE SO ABRUPT ABOUT IT!
ZIP

TA, BUZZ!
HAPPY LANDINGS, FRED!

WHOOSH!
AIM FOR ONE OF THOSE SUPPOSED THIEVES--THEY'VE GOT TO BE GOOD FOR SOMETHING!
SO WHAT DID WE GET? FIFTY, SIXTY THOUSAND?
NOTHING.
NOTHING?!
YEAH...IMAGINE, A FENCE WHO WON'T BUY STOLEN GOODS!
GONE FISHIN'

HEY, HE CLOSED HIS FENCE SHOP!

WHICH WAY TO THE NEXT FENCE?

THERE ISN'T A NEXT ONE-- THIS WAS THE LAST ONE OPEN!

DID YOU HEAR THAT? THEY CAN'T ALL HAVE CLOSED DOWN-- CAN THEY?

MAYBE THE LOCALS HAVE, BUT WE CAN STILL GO TO IADD ALLEY!

SURELY THEY'VE AVOIDED ALL OF THIS!

ILLEGAL ACQUISITIONS DISPOSAL AND DEVELOPMENT-- IADD--ALLEY, HOME TO THE BIGGEST, WEALTHIEST FENCES IN THE GALAXY. THEY ARE THE TREND-SETTERS, THE FENCES WHO KNOW WHAT'S HOT IN HOT MERCHANDISE, AND, AS THEY NEVER CEASE TO SAY, THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS...

We're Not Buying! So You Better Get Flying.

CLOSED 24 HOURS A DAY

CLOSED

YOU'RE WASTING GAS! GO HOME!

WELL, THIS BODES ILL FOR OUR CHANCES OF SELLING GUMBY!

HA HA HA HA HA

CLOSED! GO AWAY!

FRED AND BIANCA'S WORST FEARS ARE REALIZED AS THE FREDMOBILE CRUISES THE DISTRICT, WHERE ONCE WERE GARISH LIGHTS CAN NOW ONLY BE FOUND DEEP SHADOWS. BUT THEN, LIKE A FAINT BEACON OF HOPE, FRED AND BIANCA SPOT LIGHT NARROWLY STREAMING FROM ONE FENCE'S STORE!
HA! ALL IS NOT LOST YET, BIANCA! LOOK DOWN THERE!
BOY, 'TIL WE SAW YOUR LIGHT, WE WERE BEGINNING TO FEEL DISTINCTLY UNWANTED AROUND HERE!
THAT'S BECAUSE THIEVES ARE UNWELCOME HERE! WE DON'T NEED YOU, SO LEAVE US ALONE!
HUH? YOU WOULDN'T EXIST WITHOUT THIEVES!
HA! IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU THIEVES THAT EVERYONE IS CLOSED! ALL MY MONEY IS TIED UP IN STUFF THAT'LL NEVER SELL!
SO WHY DIDN'T YOU DO SOMETHING RADICAL--LIKE NOT BUY THE CRAP IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHAT--? AND MISS OUT ON A CHANCE TO MAKE A FORTUNE OVERNIGHT?!
OH, OF COURSE--THAT MAKES PERFECT SENSE...

THIEVES WHO CAN'T STEAL, FENCES WHO WON'T BUY -- WHAT'S THE GALAXY COMING TO?

IF THINGS KEEP GOING LIKE THIS, PROBABLY SOME KIND OF REVOLTINGLY TRANQUIL UTOPIA...

WE'VE GOT TO AVOID THAT AT ALL COSTS!

HEY, WHAT IF WE PULLED OFF THE HEIST OF THE CENTURY?

"ONE THAT WOULD WAKE THE FENCES UP! AND I KNOW JUST HOW TO DO IT!"

AND, DAYS LATER...

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING!

I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT--THERE'S A GLITCH IN TIME FORMING EVEN AS WE SPEAK! THAT RAREST OF GALACTIC PHENOMENA --AND WE'VE GOT ONE JUST A FEW LIGHT YEARS AWAY!

THE GLITCH WILL ONLY LAST FOR A WEEK OR SO, THEN IT'S GONE-- FOREVER! AND IT SCREWS UP THE TIME STREAM SO WE CAN'T GET BACK TO IT ONCE IT'S GONE!

YES, YES -- VERY NICE. BUT WHAT DOES ALL THAT HAVE TO DO WITH US?

HOURS LATER, THE INVITATIONS GO OUT TO ALL THE MAJOR FENCES ANNOUNCING AN IMPORTANT MEETING ON A SMALL, DESERTED PLANET...

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT, SIR! YES, VERY GLAD INDEED!
YOU SEE, GLITCHES AREN'T JUST RARE-- THEY'RE A PAIN IN THE ASS TO USE -- LOTS OF WEAR AND TEAR ON ANYONE AND ANYTHING THAT GOES THROUGH ONE!
BUT WE, DARING THIEVES THAT WE ARE, PLAN TO USE THAT SPACE ANOMALY TO PULL OFF THE HEIST OF HEISTS!
THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE GOING TO STEAL TONS OF THAT RARE ELEMENT, ZIRCONIAN SILICATE!
ZIRCONIAN SILICATE?! IF YOU CAN DO THAT, YOU CAN MAKE US ALL RICH!
YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL THERE, FRIEND!
GREAT!
YOU'VE SOLD ME!
I CAN'T WAIT!
I KNEW YOU'D GO FOR IT! NOW, ALL WE NEED ARE SOME GUARANTEED ORDERS!
HA HA HA

GUARANTEED ORDERS? LOOK, TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO--IF I NEED SOME ZIRCONEAN SILICATE AFTER YOU'VE STOLEN IT, I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL! YOU HAVE MY WORD... PROVIDED YOU TAKE BACK ANY I CAN'T UNLOAD!
SAY WHAT?! YOU MEAN YOU WANT US TO TAKE ALL THE RISKS, SUFFER ALL THE EXPENSES, AND PROMISE TO TAKE BACK WHAT YOU SAY YOU CAN'T SELL?
SORRY! THAT'S AS FAR AS I'M WILLING TO GO!
IT'S THE MARKET, FRED! TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT!
"FINE! WE'RE LEAVING IT AND YOU!"
TIME PASSES. THE GLITCH FORMS...THEN GRADUALLY DISPERSES. NOT LONG AFTER, IT'S ONLY A WISTFUL MEMORY OF GRAND LARCENY UNDONE...
SO, HAVE YOU COME UP WITH A WAY TO DEAL WITH THIS GLUT?
NOT SINCE YOU ASKED ME FIVE MINUTES AGO...
I SUPPOSE WE COULD ALWAYS MAKE THE ROUNDS OF FENCES AGAIN...

NAH--WE'VE WASTED ENOUGH OF OUR TIME --LET THEM COME TO US!
FINE BY ME!
BRRNG BRRNG
CALL ON LINE
HEY, THE PHONE! MAYBE IT'S A FENCE!
YOU SURE WERE RIGHT ABOUT THAT ZIRCONEAN SILICATE! I NEED 5000 POUNDS OF IT!
ZIRCONEAN--? WE DON'T HAVE ANY!
WHAT?! DID YOU SELL IT ALL TO ANOTHER FENCE?
NO, WE DIDN'T SELL IT!
WE DIDN'T EVEN STEAL IT, YOU IDIOT! IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE WITHOUT GUARANTEED SALES!
WHAT? LOOK, I TOLD YOU THAT I MIGHT BUY IT IF YOU STOLE--
EXACTLY! AND THAT'S WHY WE DIDN'T!
CALL OVER
CLICK
BRRNNG
HI, GUYS! GOT ANY ZIRCONEAN SILICATES LEFT?
OVER
CLICK
BRRNNG BRRNNG
JUST IGNORE IT, BIANCA--JUST IGNORE IT

THE MONTHS ROLL BY. FRED AND BIANCA CONTINUE THEIR NORMAL ROUTINE --CAREFULLY PLANNING AND EXECUTING JOBS EVERY MONTH OR SO--BUT NOT ONCE HAVE THEY TAKEN THEIR LOOT TO A FENCE...
HOW MUCH LONGER DO YOU THINK IT'LL BE BEFORE THE GLUT COMES TO AN END?
SOON, I HOPE! THE FREDMOBILE CAN HOLD ANYTHING WE STEAL, BUT I REALLY DON'T WANT TO TRY TO FENCE THE STUFF MYSELF!
HOW ABOUT A LITTLE SPIN IN THE ZERO-G ROOM?
BRRNNG BRRNNG
CURSE! I-- BLAST! THE PHONE ALWAYS RINGS AT THE WRONG TIME!
FRED, BIANCA! HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN QUITE A WHILE! YOU HAVEN'T GONE OUT OF BUSINESS, HAVE YOU?
NOT HARDLY! BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO SELL OUR STUFF AT A LOSS, EITHER!

A YEAR PASSES. FRED AND BIANCA HAVE PULLED OFF TEN SPECTACULAR JOBS, EACH ONE RECEIVING MUCH COVERAGE ON I.N.N.'s THIEVERY NEWS SEGMENT. FINALLY, THEY DECIDE TO CHECK OUT THE MARKET...
LOOK AT THIS! THE STORE IS CLEAN! AND HARDLY ANYONE IS HERE!
THIS IS CRAP, KID! GET OUT AND QUIT WASTING MY TIME!
TAKE A NUMBER, 26 15 TAKE TWO --THEY'RE SMALL.
NO, NO, NO! THAT'S NOT CRAP --THAT'S IN-NO-VA-TIVE!
SHOW 'EM IN-NO-VA-TIVE, KITTY CAT! THEN SHOW 'EM THE DOOR!
HI, BUZZ! LONG TIME NO SEE, SO TO SPEAK!
THANK THE STARS --FINALLY, SOME PROFESSIONALS! LET'S CHECK OUT WHAT YOU'VE GOT FOR ME!
HM... GOOD STUFF --I'LL GIVE YOU A QUARTER OF A MILLION FOR IT ALL!
THAT'S ALMOST WHAT WE FIGURED IT WAS WORTH!
DONE, BUZZ!
GOOD, GOOD! THERE'S ALWAYS A MARKET FOR QUALITY GOODS!
YEP, BUZZ--JUST LOOK FOR OUR DISTINCTIVE THIEVERY FOR STOLEN GOODS YOU CAN TRUST!

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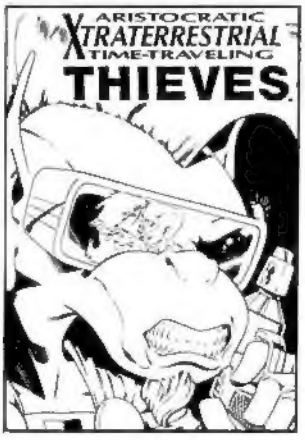

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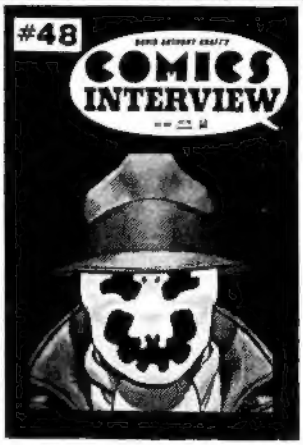

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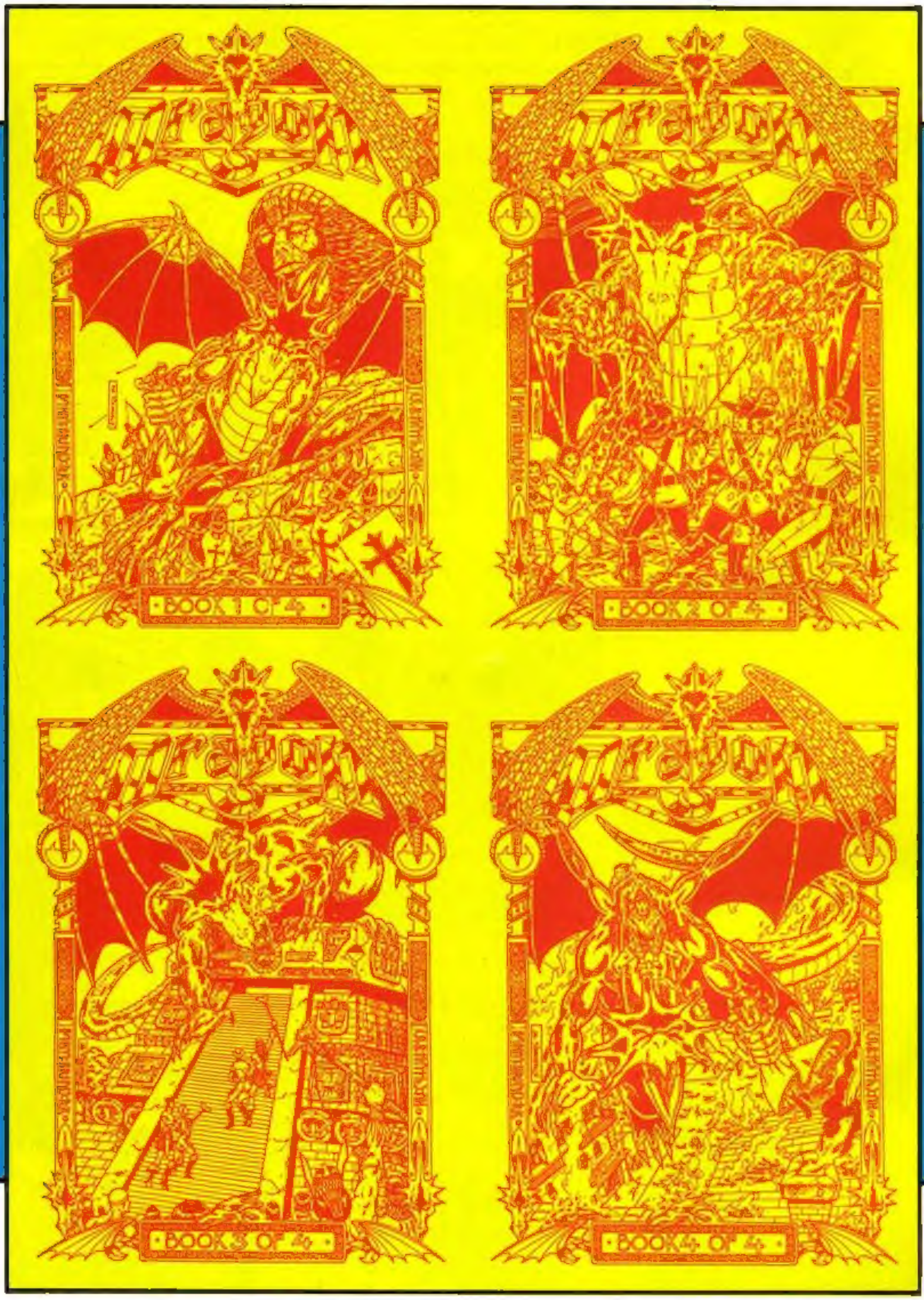
#1 -- August 3

#2 -- August 10



#3 -- August 17

#4 -- August 24

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